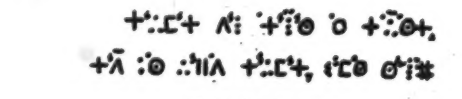
3: Holiday J-5 (ca. 1955) 1956 MS25 Tuareg MS25
Hoggar

eyes are probably descended from the Vandals who invaded north Africa some 300 years earlier. Legend, though not springing from the Tuareg themselves, suggests they grew out of a lost band of Crusaders that wandered into the desert after the Holy wars of the middle ages: a legend that draws attention to the Tuareg's use of chain mail and long two-handed swords and to his stature and Aryan features. The language of the Tuareg is called Tamahaq; their speech soft and guttural. In its written form, Tifinar, the alphabet is possibly that of the ancient Libyans. The hieroglyphics are utterly unlike Arabic and the construction of the alphabet is consonantal, a feature which makes the task of translation difficult. For many years now Dr. Wakefield, an Englishwoman, has been living in Tamanrasset making a study of Tamahaq and translating the Bible. It is already 8 years ago that the National Bible Society of Scotland published the Book of Ruth for missionary work among the Tuareg based on Dr. Wakefield's studies.



The Bible in Tamahaq

(*Ruth. Ch.* 2, *Verse* 17)

"So she gleaned in the field until evening, and when she beat out what she had gleaned, it was about an ephah of barley."

Again, the influence of such work is too limited at present to be a cogent factor. From the standpoint of religion the Tuareg reveal a strange mixture of paganism and lip-service to Islam. Literally, the word Tuareg—or, in its purer form Twarek—means "abandoned", i.e., the abandoned of God. To some extent the limits of the Tuareg domain are fixed by his superstitions; which have peopled areas like the Plateau du Tademait, north of In Salah and the mountains of Emmid-Din to the east of the Ahaggar with ghosts and djinns. The Tuareg are, above everything, religious opportunists; in that, like all superstitious people, they believe what suits them best. Unlike most other social groups they do not seem to have synthetised their beliefs or emotions into a set of religious observance that is a collective interest of the community. Marriage and divorce exist but, sexually, the tribe is a-moral and a feature of the social structure of the group is the "ahal", a love-feast at which the men serenade their chosen lovers, praising their beauty in terms of the moon, a flower or with images equally poetic and universal.

Tuareg society is matriarchal: another distinctive feature that sets them apart from the Arab world. Although authority appears to be invested in the male, in so far as tribal groups are administered by the Amenokal, or king, it is through the women that heredity is determined. The child of a Targui begotten by a woman outside the tribe will not be Tuareg; but a Targuia (Tuareg woman) who has a child by a slave, for instance, claims for the offspring direct Tuareg descent, though not necessarily in the same social circle. There are, in fact, several social strata within Tuareg society that have arisen through the centuries as a result of raiding for slaves; and also from the involved relationship between slaves and slaves, and masters and slaves since the children of some are free, while others are not; and the children of the second generation of some are free. These last are called "Hartanis", meaning literally, "free in the second generation (from "Harr"—free, "Thani"—second). The nobility of the tribe are known as "Kel" and the men can be distinguished by the dark blue veil. The serfs, although Tuareg by birth, wear a white veil, while the Hartanis, who are mostly of negroid descent, go unveiled.

Thus it is that a great many influences have combined to build up the tribe and, consequently, it is not surprising to find in their music certain similar incongruities.

524
533
584
832
[539]

"Tamott tekness
"Ehere iouof
"Ta'hett ter'tess
"Tir'irt touoss"

which means:

The woman who argues.
Flocks that scatter.
The she-ass that breaks her tether.
The pot that tips over.

In a joking way, to be a real wit, the man could answer: "If I should find myself in this situation, I would first gather the flock, I would re-tether the ass, I would put the pot back on the fire, and only then would I pay attention to the woman, " and there would be a chorus of indignant protests.

The woman makes it a point of honor to have as many admirers as possible. This is a proof that she is pretty and will not have trouble in getting married. 584 832

The ahal, begun after sunset, lasts quite late into the night, and the pale light that is shed by the stars allows shamelessness to have free rein. Although the married women joke and take part in the games, they behave themselves comparatively well. The others, however, may sit on the knees of their admirers. They kiss, but in a special way. Since the man must never uncover his mouth, he lowers his veil under his nose, and he piously smells the nose! of his loved one, who herself may kiss him. Even intimate handling (proh pudor! /oh, shame/) is allowed, which is never seen among the Arabs. 533 584 832

During these gatherings, when the amz'ad is played, it is listened to with great pleasure. This instrument has a way of exciting /10/ the Tuareg, who utter "Ouh! ouh!" as a sign of pleasure. They have even made a verb of it: isouhouh. [201]

But now is the time when the camels come from the pasture. They must be milked: that is the az'ouz'edj ⵣ'ⵊ (from ez'edj ⵣ'ⵊ , to milk). The women get up, and those present are given milk to drink. They will have to disperse. [272]

The women get up and make a sort of mattress of sand or earth, which is called "adebel" ||ⵍⵡ and which is covered with a haïk. Over it will be set the skin tent on two wooden arches, "idjedjan" ⵉⵊⵊⵉⵏ , and the usual pegs. 585

But at this point the men intervene and seize the tent cover. Two on one side and two on the other, they throw it back and forth three times, calling "Saoula iaoulit (throw and send back)." This brings good fortune. [777]

Then the tent is finally set up. The men lead the groom to the tent. He is made to go around it three times; then he enters, taking care to put his right foot in first, again because this brings good fortune. [777]

The groom is in the tent with his friends. The women then accompany the bride while singing: 585 533 539

"Bismillaten ar essa .ⴱⵙⵎⵉⵍⵍⴰⵜⵏ ⴰⵔ ⵙⵙⴰ

"Se iz'ar isem n yalla .ⵙⴻ ⵉⵣⵄⴰⵔ ⵉⵙⵎ ⵏ ⵢⴰⵍⵍⴰ

"Foull ilik ner' as tedoua".ⴼⵓⵍ ⵉⵍⵉⴽ ⵏⴻⵔⵄ ⴰⵙ ⵜⴻⴷⵓⴰ

which means:

"In the name of God on them up to seven times,
"Preceding the name of God,
"On our daughter who left in the evening (for her husbands's home)." /17/

A few meters from the tent the son of the bride's maternal aunt comes forward and wants to hold the bride back, telling her: "I will not let you leave before receiving my gift, my sandals. Aouid ir'atimen (give me my sandals)." The groom or his friends then pass him a pair of sandals which were set aside for this purpose or, lacking these, another gift. 585 431

Then the women in chorus ask questions to which the men reply in chorus. 585 533 539

Women's chorus:

Nellouz ⵏⵍⵍⵓⵣ We are hungry.

Men's chorus:

Atekchimet ⵜⴰⴽⴽⵛⵉⵎⵉⵜ You will eat.

Women's chorus:

Ner'loul ⵏⵔⵄⵍⵓⵍ We are naked.

Men's chorus:

Atelsimet ⵜⴰⵍⵙⵉⵎⴻⵜ You will be clothed.

Women's chorus:

Nerdjih ⵏⴻⵔⴷⵊⵉⵀ We are afoot.

Men's chorus

Atar'ermet ⵜⴰⵔⵔⴰⵎⴻⵜ You will be mounted.

Then the bride and the women, addressing the groom, sing these two lines:

Outterir' inelli n isakan ⵓⵜⵜⴻⵔⵉⵔ ⵉⵏⴻⵍⵍⵉ ⵏ ⵉⵙⴰⴽⴰⵏ

Essoufeq inelli n foudan ⵉⵙⵙⵓⴼⴻⵇ ⵉⵏⴻⵍⵍⵉ ⵏ ⴼⵓⴷⴰⵏ

"I do not want any bechna (carried by) young camels.

"I prefer bechna (carried by) strong and solid camels, " meaning by this that she expects of her husband the deeds of a strong, brave man and not the behavior of a child. /18/

Then the bride enters the tent, and the guests withdraw and go to feast.

For seven days the groom's food is provided by the bride's relatives. During this time the newlyweds do not leave their tent, but people go there to entertain and visit them.

Custom decrees that the newly weds live beside the wife's parents for a year in order to give her time to get used to separation from them, which they call "az'alaï" ⴰⵣⵄⴰⵍⴰⵢ (from the verb "ez'li" ⴻⵣⵄⵍⵉ , to separate).

Monogamy is the absolute rule.

We have said that the ahal is one of the reasons for late marriages. Another reason lies in the fact that many Tuareg are satisfied with Negro concubines.

Chapter VIII

Divorce

Divorce, in Tamashek "tellef" ⵜⴻⵍⵍⴻⴼ or "oulouï" ⵓⵍⵓⵢ ⵍⵍ (from the verb "ellef" ⵍⵍⴻⴼ , to divorce),

Should one see here some agreement with what we have 114
read in Dozy, or might the uran have been a "totem" among 825
the Tuareg, as among the Redskins of America?

Nobles do not eat the "dobb" (star lizard) either, which 262
is called "aguezzeram" in Tamashek. As a reason for this 565
abstinence, they quoted me these two lines of nine syllables: 825

Our ekcher' aguezzeram idit [539]
Iladhou ichchaden ilir'it.

This means:

"I do not eat the aguezzeram because it smells bad and has a rough skin" (1).

1. Iladhou is put instead of "ili adhou." Similarly, ilir'it is put for "ili ir'it." Ir'it, plural ir'ten, means hide (of beef, camel, etc.).

Finally, they firmly refuse to eat chickens and eggs, and chickens are found nowhere among the Tuareg, except among [231]
some "harratine" /Haratin/ Arabs of the Ahaggar villages. They claim that this abstinence dates back for a long time. Aziouel ag Ser'ada when pressed ended by telling me that it was because chickens seek their food in manure. In the Niger, according to a study by officer-interpreter Merle, the French are called egg eaters. But I believe that the following is the 262
real reason for this abstention: The Tuareg, like all the 565
Berbers, had embraced Kharijism. Among the chiefs who took 825
part in the insurrection of the Kharwarij /plural of Kharijite. 773
Ed./ was Tarif, who made the first invasion into Spain (the city of Tarifa still bears his name). His son Salih, or Salah, claimed to be a prophet and composed a new Koran. Elijah, or Elias, son of /62/ the latter, openly remained Moslem, and it was only Salih's grandson, Jonah, or Younes, (end of the eighth century), who spread the new doctrine, which was a much modified Islamism. According to one of the precepts of

857 /123 cont./ uran made the camel run until it fell completely
868 exhausted and refused to budge. The man almost died of
825 thirst while following the tracks of his animal. When he found it the first thing he did, even before drinking, was to let the uran go."

855 Upon re-entering the tent at night, tired from running about during the day, his imagination full of his discoveries, the child settles down in front of the fire, whose flames execute a marvelous dance for him. His eyes close as Venus, "she who sold her father to have beauty," sinks on the horizon.
[264] This does not please the mother; the child must eat, and one eats late in the tent, for the slaves must milk the camels and goats before making supper. She awakens her son, draws him to her, covering him with a dokkali to protect him from the cool of the night, and then begins to tell tales of the past.

/124/ These stories, which make up Tuareg folklore,
• 539 tend to disappear. Many young people do not know them; one must ask the old Tuareg men, those who miss the days of the raids, or, preferably, the women, who in all ages have been the keepers of tradition.

Some of these stories are fables peopled by the animals of the Ahaggar or the Sudan; sometimes they express a moral, but that is rare. Others are amazing tales in which monsters and genii harass men; often a hero succeeds in vanquishing them. These stories are very long; they contain instruction in the customs, and I think they bear a message from distant ancestors. This message, sometimes stylized, truncated, or embellished by the oral transmission, deserves to be studied; in order to do this, as many as possible of these tales should be collected before they are forgotten.

Here is the story of the jackal and the dob, as it was told to me by one of my pupils, a Targui of noble stock.

539 /124 cont./ The jackal and the dob were hunting together when chance led them to fall upon a goat, who soon departed this life. The dob made the fire while the jackal carved up the animal. The liver and the heart, grilling on the goals, gave off an enticing odor, which made the jackal regret his promise to the dob to share the hunt. Being shrewd and crafty, he sought a way to do his companion out of his share of the spoils. "Would you," he said to the dob, "take this liver and heart to my old mother, who lives in the next ravine? The poor thing can't hunt any more. While you are gone, I'll be dividing the meat." So the dob went off, trotting across the sand and rocks, carrying as best he could the gifts of the attentive son.

As soon as his partner was out of sight, the jackal jumped over the ravine, scaled the hill, and waited for the dob at the appointed place. Pretending to be feeble, he received with many thanks the gifts brought by the lizard. The latter took the path back with his rocking gait. Upon arriving back at the site of /125/ the kill, he saw the jackal stretched out near a clump of afazzou, full and sleepy, but there was no sign of the meat he expected to see.

"Where is my share?" he asked.

The jackal hardly bothered to look at him; a harsh laugh made the poor dob understand that he had been tricked.

Angry at having been so rudely cheated and vexed by the manner of the jackal, the lizard tied the bones of the goat to the tail of the sleeper. When he had finished his work, he said:

"Wake up! a man is coming toward us."

"No matter," answered the jackal without even opening his eyes.

"Careful, my friend, two dogs are with him."

Without asking any further questions, the jackal jumped up and ran off as fast as he could go. At each bound the bones hit the ground, making him believe the dogs were about to grab him. He ran and ran and ran, and, during his frantic

539/125 cont./ flight, the bones dropped off one by one. Only one was left when, exhausted, he turned around to face his enemy. He understood then how the dob had taken his revenge. Furious, he retraced his steps, determined to make the dob pay for his impudence.

But the dob had forseen the anger of the jackal and had hidden in a hole in a boulder, barely showing the end of his nose.

"How in the world did you make that hole to hide in? I would like to have such a safe place myself," said the jackal sweetly.

"Very easy," the dob assured him. "Go get plenty of dry wood, stack it against the boulder, and make a great fire. When the flames are high, butt your head very hard against the rock, and it will open up. We dobs always do it that way."

Driven by his anger, the jackal carefully followed the instructions of the dob. Knocked out by the butt he gave, he fell in the fire and was roasted.

Stories of this sort are numerous, always amusing and full of lessons, as much by the observation /126/ of the animals' characters as by the morals to be drawn.

Here is a story in which the jackal is tricked by the hedgehog. The latter enjoys a most flattering reputation for cleverness.

A hedgehog and a jackal one day found themselves before a dead camel, which offered an excellent feast for the pair. "Go look for some fire," the jackal said to the hedgehog, hoping to play one of his tricks on him while he was gone. The hedgehog, rightly suspicious, replied: "Your legs are longer than mine, and you have an established reputation as a runner; you can find fire a lot faster than I can; you go, and I'll stay and guard our prize."

• 539 /126 cont./ The jackal left at his little trot, which enables him to cover the longest distances without tiring. The hedgehog, having watched the departure of his partner, went back to the camel and cut it into small pieces, which he buried near a tahla /tree/. When he had hidden all of the animal, covered the holes with sand, and rubbed out the traces of his comings and goings, he stuck the camel's tail in a hole, leaving only a few tufts of hair visible. At that point he saw the jackal returning with a firebrand; he then seized the end of the tail and pretended to be trying to pull it from the ground.

"What are you doing in that ridiculous position?" the jackal asked. "Tell me what has happened to the camel, which I don't see any more."

All out of breath, the hedgehog replied: "The animal wasn't dead; it heard that we wanted to cook it, and scarcely had you gone when it dug a hole in the ground to hide itself. I'm not strong, and I couldn't keep it from digging in and burying itself, but I've got it by the tail and it can't get very far."

"Let me take your place; I won't have any trouble in pulling it out."

"Don't get excited," said the hedgehog. "We've got plenty of time."

Alas! The jackal did not listen to this counsel of moderation; /127/ he pulled violently and fell over backward, the camel's tail hanging sadly from his muzzle.

"Your haste has ruined us," the hedgehog said. "The camel has disappeared underground. At least we still have the tail, which we'll have to content ourselves with."

"You'll get nothing, stupid hedgehog," barked the jackal angrily.

He grabbed the tail and ran off with it to appease his hunger.

Let us now listen to a story, "einoukhast," as the Tuareg say, which is very well known and is often told:

/127 cont./

539 The Lion, the Hyena, and the Jackal

Game being rare, the lion invited the hyena and the jackal to hunt with him on a certain summer day.

The association proved to be fruitful; in a short while the ground was strewn with antelopes and gazelles. A lavish meal awaited the hunters. The lion, fair by nature, asked the hyena to divide the shares. The latter, with his powerful jaws, soon cut up the game into pieces, and made three obviously equal piles. "Very good," said the lion when the work was finished, "but what is the meaning of these piles?"

"This one," said the hyena, "is for you, that one for me, and the other one for the jackal."

Two powerful blows with his paws, knocking over the hyena, constituted the first reaction of the lion, who then explained: "That is no way to divide the shares; people are right to say that you are dense."

The lion calmed himself and said to the jackal: "See if you can settle this question."

The jackal restored the piles of meat, which had been scattered by the lion, and said: "This first pile is for you, the second pile is for your meal tonight, and the third pile is for your lunch tomorrow."

The lion was extremely pleased. "Who taught you to divide shares like that?"

"It was the cuff you gave to the hyena," said the jackal.

/128/ The oral tradition often passes on lifelike stories, stripped of all marvels but which are profitable lessons, such as the two anecdotes which follow:

539 /128 cont./

The Negress and the Three "Tahenchit" (1)

1. The Tuareg tahenchit designates the cynhyena -- Tycaon pictus. This is a ferocious animal which hunts in packs and will attack men and sometimes lions.

One day a Negress left her village to gather wood. She had finished gathering her fagots when she saw three ferocious and hungry tahenchit running in her direction. Dropping her wood and calling on God, the Negress scrambled up the nearest tree. Scratched by the thorns of this saving tamat, she regarded the three wild beasts which, with foaming muzzles, besieged the tree. The day passed, and night fell. The beasts seemed to be asleep, and the Negress was very sleepy herself, but each time she dozed off she nearly fell. What had to happen, happened; she went to sleep, then fell. In falling, she screamed, and then screamed louder still upon landing on the ground in the middle of the tahenchit.

"Take your shares, " she cried, hiding her head in her arms.

But the tahenchit, frightened by her cries and the noise of the fall, fled toward the desert. The Negress did the same toward the village.

825 The tahenchit is feared by the Tuareg who go to the Sudan; the animal does not inhabit the Ahaggar at present. The Augiéras-Draper mission of 1927-1928 found one on the border of the Tanezrouft near Timissao. The ferocity of these animals is hard to believe. The Tuareg tell of one of

825 /128 cont./ their men who was surprised by a pack of cynhyenas and who took refuge in a tree, where he feared a long siege. Knowing the voracity of the tahenchit, he cut his finger and let the blood fall on one of the beasts. In a very short time, the pack fell on the one /129/ that received the drops of blood and tried to tear him to pieces. The attacked beast fled, pursued by all the pack. The Targui got out of this difficult situation thanks to his knowledge of the habits of the desert beasts.

• 539 Here is another story, which proves that it is well to be armed in all circumstances.

The Two Brothers and the Lion

It is said that there were once two brothers, still living in their parents' tent, who were united by a rare affection for each other. Nearly old enough to marry, they often went to pay court to the girls of neighboring camps. They showed themselves to be true Tuareg from the tendi to the ahal /gatherings where young people of both sexes meet/.

One evening one of them went out alone, dressed in his best finery and armed with his spear. As the camp he was to visit was quite nearby, he left on foot.

After having walked for a good hour, he realized that the camp he was looking for had moved. At the camp site, a lion wandered about in search of food.

Upon seeing the man, the beast became frightened, then roared and leaped. The Targui, quick on the defense, hurled his spear and pierced the lion's front and back left paws. Despite being hobbled by the spear, the lion struck the man with his good paw, killed him, and tore him to shreds.

The next morning the other Targui began to worry when he saw that his brother had not returned. He carefully armed himself, taking his spear, his shield, and his takouba /sword/, and set out to follow the tracks.

539 /129 cont./ Upon arriving at the scene of the drama, he soon was able to reconstruct the event and to see its fatal outcome. As he was a brave man, he could not return to camp without avenging his brother.

He tested his takouba to make sure it left the scabbard easily, held his shield close to him, and steadied his spear. When he was ready, he cried "Arr arr rrrinek" several times with all his might. (This cry, it seems, has the power to render the lion particularly furious.)

The lion soon appeared, his mane bristling, his eyes /130/ terrible. The man gave his cry again. The furious beast charged. At the first bound, the spear which still hobbled him broke. The Targui threw his spear but missed the bounding animal. Parrying the animal's terrible cuff with his shield, the Targui drew his sword and with one blow cut off the lion's head.

He returned to the tent with his trophy and with his brother's broken spear.

Even for going to the ahal, one must, in the desert, be very well armed!

[72] In the vicinity of nearly all water points in the Ahaggar, one may see engravings on the rocks. The Tuareg are very familiar with these reminders of another age; by tradition they attribute these works to two mythical characters whose names we cited in a previous chapter: Amamellen and Elias. Here is a legend concerning these two heros.

Long, long ago, long before the Tuareg came to the Ahaggar, other peoples lived on these lands. No one now is able to say who these people were. All that is known is that some among them were rich, for the land was fertile and the rains abundant. The chiefs were honored, as their tombs

539 /130 cont./ attest, and their power over the spirits was great, for they knew the language of the Kel es Souf. But all that is past, and it is not well to bring to light forgotten secrets.

At that time there lived a man called Amamellen, a noble in estate; he was rich, and he had numerous slaves to care for his flocks scattered throughout the Ahaggar. It is not known how he acquired his art, but he was extremely skilled in tracing on boulders the silhouettes of all the animals he saw around him in the desert. He also knew how to draw men. Most of the time he engraved on beautiful smooth stones, and sometimes he colored his drawings in various ways.

Amamellen had a nephew, the son of his sister, an intelligent boy, /131/ clever and courageous, who often accompanied him on his travels. By being with his uncle, Elias very soon learned to engrave and to paint.

Amamellen was satisfied and happy with the progress of his nephew.

As he grew up, Elias perfected his gifts and became even more skilled than his uncle. All the people spoke of him and praised his savoir-faire and his mastery in painting and engraving. It was also said that Elias possessed extraordinary strength. The following story was told of him. While he was practicing engraving on the rocks of the djebel /mountain/ Teferkit near the Tefedest, he saw that the kids left to wander by the slaves came to suckle their mother. Having called in vain for the goatherds to separate the animals, he became angry. With a blow of his saber he cut off the summit of the djebel Teferkit and put it down in the middle of the Adenak wadi. Having separated the goats from the kids, putting the former on one side of the summit, the latter on the other, he was able to continue his work undisturbed.

To this superhuman force, he joined such qualities of mind and heart as are seldom seen even in our time.

To hear his nephew constantly praised everywhere he went made Amamellen jealous, and this jealousy was multiplied each time he saw Elias' works.

539 /131 cont./ In those days people did not know how to control their feelings, and the time came when Amamellen wished for the death of Elias, being moved by envy and, doubtlessly, also by evil genii.

He could not openly kill his nephew, even by surprise, without being hated throughout the country, so he found a way to get rid of Elias without being suspected of the deed. Amamellen picked a slave, a strong but not very intelligent boy, who obeyed his master without trying to understand the reason for his orders. "You will go," he was told, "and lead my camel herd into that wadi we passed by some time ago, near that black mountain where I killed the antelope whose horns you saved."

/132/ "But that wadi is very far to the south, outside of the usual trails of our tribes."

"I know, but those are my orders. I also know that the wide plains are covered with excellent pastures."

"Very well, master, it shall be as you wish."

"You will not go alone; Elias will accompany you."

Lowering his voice, Amamellen told the Negro the rest of his project. He finished his instructions in a whisper, while the slave, astonished, his eyes wide, remained fixed to the spot. A rough blow brought him back to reality.

"Go," said his master, "and get everything ready by sunrise. I shall tell Elias."

The next morning a hundred camels left for the south. Elias and the slave rode in front, armed with takouba and spear. Two guerbas /waterskins/ hung from the flanks of their mounts.

When the caravan had left the last mountains of the Ahaggar and the habitual trails, the question of water began to be important. The Negro, well instructed by Amamellen, was confident of finding the well or the abankor /water hole/ before the guerbas were empty.

539 /132 cont./ Elias regretfully saw the mountains recede; he trusted the slave, who knew the way, and on his mehari he seemed to doze, as if crushed by the tedium of those immense, horizonless wastes.

One evening an isolated mountain in the reg appeared in the distance. "There is where we are going," said the slave. The next day toward noon Elias could see an immense pasture, such as his uncle had described. In the wadi's bed, immeasurably wide, a veritable sea of green stretched as far as the eye could see toward the south. Thousands of birds flew over as the camels passed.

"Let us stop here," said the Negro. "Here is where your uncle wants his animals to graze."

They established their camp at the foot of the mountain with the black rocks, which dominated the desert horizon and of which Amamellen had spoken.

/133/ It was still very early, and yet the heat became unbearable, like nothing known in the Ahaggar. Elias was thirsty, and he said to the slave: "Go look for water, for the guerbas are empty."

"Alas," said the Negro, "there is no water in this accursed country; we left the last well behind us seven days ago."

"Why didn't you fill all of the guerbas we have in reserve during our last stop at the well?"

"I didn't think of it, and you didn't tell me to."

"Go back, then, to that well and bring back water."

"How can I?" whimpered the slave. "Our animals are tired, and I could not get to the well, much less return. The beasts must eat for several days before being able to undertake this trip."

Elias realized that what the slave said was true, but he began to think that he was the victim of a trick. Instead of getting angry, he reflected and watched.

Two days passed from the time they had arrived at the pasture, two long days during which the sun of the great regs

539 /133 cont./ seemed to them to make the sand and the stones boil. The animals constantly grazed on the wet leaves which nourished them and at the same time made it possible for them to go several months without drinking. Elias was suffering from thirst, and he was astonished to see the slave carry on as usual, going from the camp to the pasture, returning under the torrid sun, in short, accomplishing all of his daily work, while he himself felt incapable of taking a few steps without falling.

Night fell; the Negro slept. Elias, who had stayed awake, took the slave's nalls /sandals/ and spread a thin layer of butter on the soles. Having returned the nalls to their place, he stretched out and pretended to sleep while continuing to watch the slave.

Well before daybreak the Negro put on his sandals, examined the sleeper a moment, then, reassured, left the camp silently. Then, jumping from rock to rock, he climbed the mountain and disappeared.

/134/ At the appearance of the first rays of the sun, Elias in his turn left for the mountain, following the prints left on the rocks by the greased nalls. There was no trace whatever of footprints on the sand, which is why Elias had not been able to follow the trail of the Negro during the first two days. This time it was different; the slave had stepped only on stones, so the trail was long and winding. Elias rested often, for he was weak with thirst, but he started off again as soon as he could, fearing to lose the small tracks which shone in the sun. After an hour of hard walking, he arrived at a hole between two boulders at the bottom of which glistened a mirror of water.

After slaking his thirst, Elias felt his strength returning rapidly and returned to the camp by the same path. He said nothing of his discovery to the Negro. Days passed. The slave was not even surprised that Elias could live without drinking. He followed his master's orders without trying to understand; he was sure he had not been followed in going to drink, and that was enough for him.

539 /134 cont./ Back in the Ahaggar, Amamellen was becoming impatient; a month had already gone by, and his slave had not yet returned. Perhaps his project had succeeded better than he had hoped; perhaps Elias was dead, and with him the compromising witness. That was what Amamellen thought, but he had to be sure. He outfitted himself and started off.

His surprise and anger were great when, upon arriving at the pasture, he saw Elias stretched out on his rug while waiting for the Negro to return from counting the herd. However, despite his disappointment, he contained himself.

"How did you find something to drink?" he asked his nephew.

"I haven't had anything to drink," replied Elias. "The Negro can swear to it."

The Negro, taken aside, did in fact confirm Elias' words.

"No matter," resumed Amamellen, "the main thing is that the herd is in good shape, and I congratulate you on that. For the time being, I intend to stay here awhile with the slave. You, Elias, will take your camel and leave for the well that is seven days from here going toward the Ahaggar. At this well, I left 100 female camels, 100 horses, and 100 asses; you will see that they drink, and you will /135/ fill the 100 guerbas that I hid near the well, after having repaired them, for many of them are ripped. Then you will return to the Ahaggar where I will rejoin you."

Elias took leave of his uncle, then left during the night. He preferred this nocturnal departure, as it allowed him to fill his guerba at the aguelman /same as guelta/ without being seen. He did not know his uncle's schemes, and he was happy to leave this place where he had almost died of thirst.

Remaining behind with his slave, Amamellen gloated over Elias' departure, for this time his nephew was sure to die despite all his cleverness. In point of fact, bandits were heading for the well in order to steal the herds, and these

539 /135 cont./ cruel raiders never left anyone alive to tell the tale of their dark deeds. Elias, who had to stay in the vicinity a long time to carry out the chores given him by his uncle, unquestionably would fall under the blows of the bandits and would perish as surely as if Amamellen himself had plunged a knife into his heart.

Elias urged his camel on, for the previous night he had seen a number of fires to the east. He knew he was not safe in these regions so far from the mountains of the Ahaggar. Such a large number of fires was suspicious. There was little doubt that it was a raiding party on the way to the Ahaggar, and it must inevitably pass near the well he was making for.

He took only three days to reach the well, having trotted every night. Without wasting any time, he assembled Amamellen's herd, drew water night and day to water them, repaired the torn guerbas, and then filled them all.

As he was getting ready to leave, an armed and menacing troop appeared and began to surround the herd with the evident intention of stealing it. Elias jumped from his camel and leaped astride the most spirited stud camel of the herd. Armed with his saber and protected by his shield, he flew at the biggest group. Striking to left and right as would some demon, he spread such terror among his assailants that they fled, swearing that they had run up against a Kel es Souf.

/136/ Without waiting any longer, Elias drove the herd before him and set out in the direction of the Ahaggar, whose steel-blue summits he perceived on the horizon.

Three days passed after he left the well, the country became wilder, the dull waste of the regs gave way to the first foothills of the Ahaggar, and the wadis wound through deep gorges. This sight overjoyed Elias, for it announced his homeland. He was attacked at a turn in a wadi by a large group of bandits. He drove his herd, the horses in the lead, into the boxed-in wadi. Shouting and bellowing, he stampeded his beasts, prodding the laggards with his spear.

•539 /136 cont./ The animals galloped ahead in a compact mass, giving the impression of a torrential flood surging down a narrow gorge. Elias, still mounted on his horse, had no trouble in routing the assailants, who were trapped against the sheer walls of the gorge by the wave of frightened animals.

However, the bandits did not want to let such a good prize get away: so many animals, and guarded by a single man, be he a devil, had to be raided, and this devil had to be punished for his boldness. They had to act before Elias could reach the high mountains of the Ahaggar, until then an inviolate lair. They waited until the herd had entered the vast Tamanrasset basin. There the wadi spreads out, goes along the Adrar Haggarène with its vertiginous peaks, and runs against the Adriane, whose vertical walls prevent all passage.

Asses, horses, camels, all advanced in close ranks in the bed of the wadi, which was bordered by verdure, when Elias saw that the raiders had formed a large arc designed to drive him against the cliffs of the Adriane. Contrary to their usual practice, the bandits advanced in silence, closing their ranks little by little. The silence was nerve wracking, and Elias felt himself lost despite his courage and his cleverness. He was going to fall before the enemy numbers, so near his native mountains, whose peaks he named to himself without thinking. There was no question of repeating his exploit at the well; the raiders would not let themselves be impressed a second time.

Elias had an inspiration. He vaulted to the slope of fallen rock at /137/ the foot of the mountain and climbed to the top of it to the beginning of the sheer wall of the cliff. He watched the movement of the bandits an instant, then unsheathed his saber and struck the cliff such a powerful blow that the mountain was nicked. The immense block thus cut away fell into a neighboring wadi. Climbing down the rocks in all haste, Elias forced his herd to climb the slope and pass through the passage he had carved out. All of the animals disappeared

539 /137 cont./ under the eyes of the bandits, who regarded with stupefaction the man who, having hewn a piece out of the mountain, defied them from the vantage point of the breach.

Thus ends this story of Elias. Others concerning this hero must exist, but they are buried in men's memories.

[823] One may still admire Elias' exploit: the breach in the Adriane is a landmark of Tamanrasset, and the boulder that was hewn from the mountain rests eight kilometers from there in the In-Zaouen wadi, where it has remained planted, a reminder of the hero's valor.

852 304 Thus, observing nature, listening to the old stories, the young Targui grows up and forms his opinion. At the age of six or seven years, he undergoes circumcision: "agadam." The relatives gather for a big meal on this occasion.

857 868 From the women, the young boy learns to sew cloth and leather. He makes toys from old rags; these are usually camels in stylized forms, sometimes having real artistic value. Toy in hand, he races with his comrades to see whose camel is the swiftest. Girls and boys alike make dolls dressed in the Tuareg style; they play camp, paying visits, drinking tea, and striking camp. The young boys carve greatly stylized camels on flat stones or on goat jawbones cut in two.

A favorite amusement consists in mounting an ass and making it gallop, which is not accomplished without numerous falls in the beginning. However, it is the camel which haunts the child; his father has /138/ already let him ride for a circle around the camp, but the little boy wants to be master of his own mount, to guide it across the fallen rocks of the nearby mountain, then to break into a fast trot on the plateau bordering the wadi but not beyond, for he would be seen from the camp and would risk a severe scolding for having taken a camel to amuse himself. Nevertheless, his parents know how it is, for they did the same thing themselves when they were young, but the "canoun" must be applied.

7:Nicolaisen E-5 (1951-1962) 1963 MS25 Tuareg MS25

of riders and their camels. This is intimated by the following poem quoted from Foucauld's excellent books on the poetry of the Ahaggar Tuareg:—

Ébeydeg, é ti n ami mellen	My white camel, O woman with white teeth
W-allahi! iḍeg ul ifel kem	I swear by God, it shall not go raiding, shall not leave you
Ula daṛ ikk am akal ien	It shall not go away from you to another country
U t ḍineṛ ar y arabuh ennem	I lead it to the pastures only to visit you with love again
Ula tahargit d asemmeḍren	Neither in dreams nor in thought
Innin é ham yekk akal ien	Shall it go away from you to another country

(cf. Foucauld 1925-30, I, p. 210 f. for a literal translation).

DONKEYS

Donkeys are very important domestic animals in the Tuareg groups I have studied. Most animals are grey or greyish but there are other colours for which the Tuareg have special terms. From Ahaggar the following colour-terms can be mentioned:— *adebara* (greyish), *afawa* (greyish with a white stomach), *ewriṛ* (yellow-brown), *éhenbey*, or *takenbawt* (donkey with a black head), *ékawél* (black). Black donkeys seem to be more common among the Arabs of the Northern Sahara than among the Tuareg.

Donkeys vary less in colour than other domestic animals among the Tuareg. It is interesting to note in this connection that there are fairly big herds of wild donkeys, or asses, in the mountainous massifs of Ahaggar, Tasilé-n-Ajjer, and Ayr. These animals are generally greyish like most domestic donkeys.

Fig. 83. Women carrying cereals in skin bags loaded on donkeys. Ahaggar, the *Dag Ɣali* tribe.